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ABSTRACT

Barnard College has created a Women's Center that devotes itself to the task of reaffirming the dignity, autonomy, and equality of women. For too long society has held that women are less rational than men, less capable than men, and thus that educating women is less useful than educating men. Replacing myth with fact is the responsibility of everyone. What the Women's Center hopes to contribute is, first, a dialog about the problems, the place, and the potential of women in contemporary life; second, new bonds between a college and women away from college; and third, fresh insight for undergraduates about what it means to be a woman in modern times. In this brochure are a series of brief remarks about men, women, and society, and about women and Barnard and the Barnard Women's Center. The comments touch on the necessity for Women's Studies; Barnard's research collection; women and the academic world; women and work; and the cultural context into which the Women's Center fits. (Author/HS)

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THE WOMEN'S CENTER

BARNARD COLLEGE

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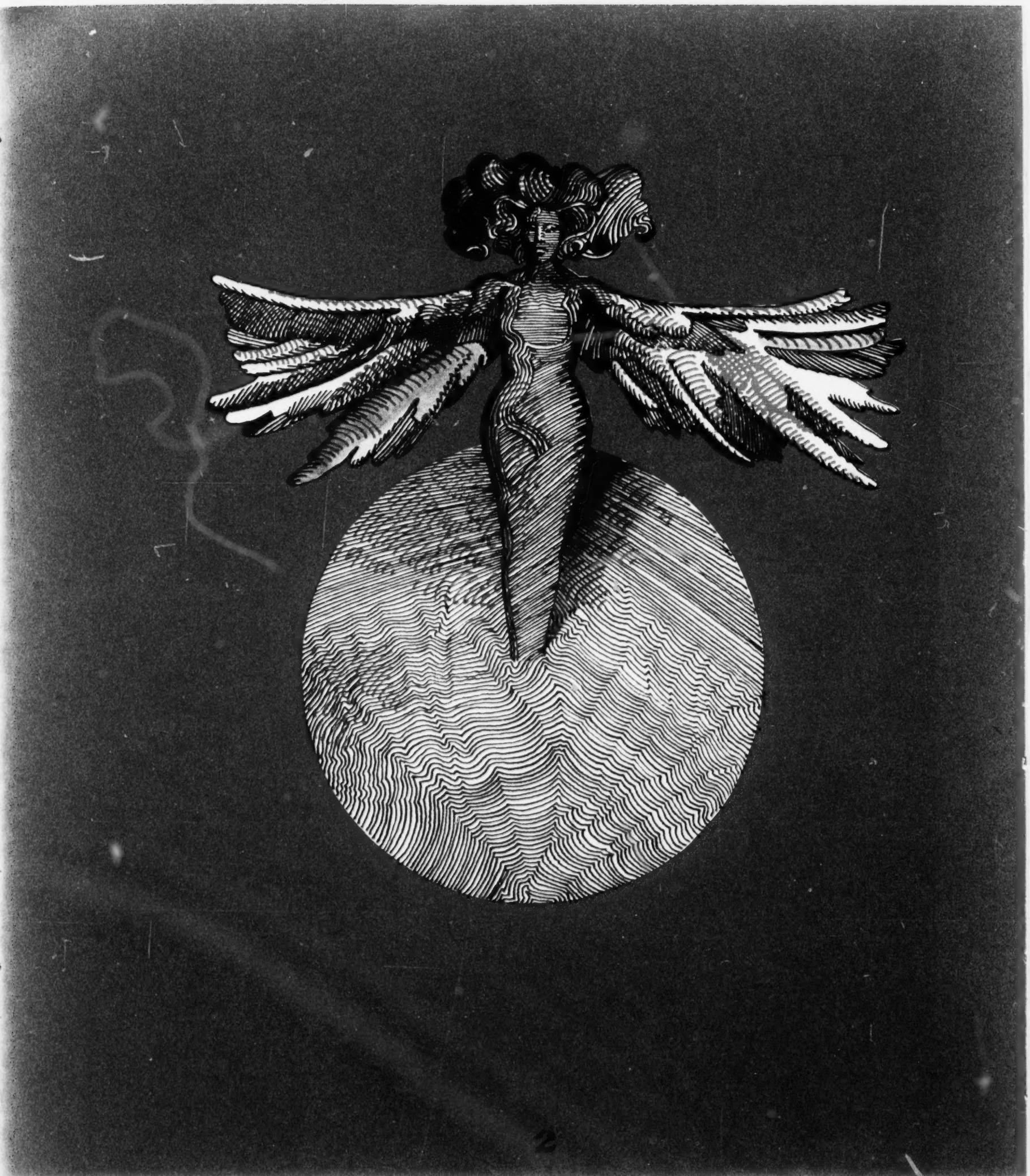

INTRODUCING THE CENTER

The Barnard Women's Center is a new program for an old need: the dignity, autonomy, and equality of women. More than a place, more than a project, it symbolizes the way in which a college may gather its energies on behalf of women. It is Barnard's way of reaffirming its commitment to educating women to take their place in the world, the very premise on which the College was founded.

For too long society has held to be true a number of myths about women, some of them destructive myths. Especially destructive to colleges, particularly women's colleges, was the notion that women were less rational than men, less capable than men, so that educating women was less useful than educating men.

Replacing myth with fact is, of course, the responsibility of everyone. What the Women's Center hopes to contribute is, first, a dialogue about the problems, the place, and the potential of women in contemporary life; second, new bonds between a college and women away from college; and third, fresh insight for undergraduates about what it means to be a woman in modern America.

The Center will draw upon Barnard faculty, which now teaches perhaps the most versatile group of Women's Studies courses in the nation; upon Columbia University and its vast resources; upon New York, where so many women of diverse talents and skills live; upon the Barnard alumnae.

When we think of our plans, we ask ourselves if they are broad enough to interest many women; if they will help create a real body of knowledge about women; if they will free women to use their education as fully as possible; if they will give undergraduates something serious and substantial. Why not, we go on to ask ourselves, have a permanent series of seminars on Women and Society? Why not systematically bring back women of varied experience, alumnae and others, to talk to undergraduates? Why not have a committee of Barnard alumnae who are lawyers to explore cases of discrimination?

How will we finance our activities? It seems most fitting that the income from the bequest of Helen Rogers Reid '03, a former Board Chairman and lifelong crusader for women's rights, will be used to launch the first programs of the Center.

Many people—men and women—have been a part of the genesis of the Women's Center. It is impossible to generalize about them, but if we have all felt some common emotions, surely they include anger (or at the very least discontent), because of the past; eagerness, because of the possibility of changing the past; and enormous excitement, because of what a college community might do.

In this brochure are a series of brief remarks about men, women, and society; about women and Barnard; about the Barnard Women's Center. The comments touch on the necessity for Women's Studies; Barnard's research collection; women, especially Barnard women, and the academic world; on women and work; and the cultural context into which the Center fits. I hope they will show what the Center is, why it came into being, and what it may become: a place of study, a place for students, and a place where thought and action nurture each other.

Catharine R. Stimpson
Chairman
Executive Committee
Barnard Women's Center

THE CASE FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

There are now eleven courses on women in the regular Barnard curriculum. Their appearance has been in keeping with Barnard's academic style. Some of our faculty have had a long-standing interest in such materials and, in the present climate, have been encouraged to offer courses where they may share this interest with students. Other faculty members have developed their interest relatively recently, but have done so against a background of intense involvement with a field where the special experience of women has clearly been ignored.

Barnard's courses on women are given in a variety of disciplines, with no major planned at the moment. Sometimes they are presented within the framework of a colloquium with a changing theme. In this case, the "women" theme may be succeeded in some future year by another topic. At other times, a course will be added as a regular offering. Its fate will be determined by the educational and practical considerations that guide departmental offerings, along with the impalpable criterion that applies to each course at Barnard: Does it have a convincing life of its own?

Some say that courses on women are needlessly particularizing and parochial. Might it not be more appropriate to think of such courses as a rearrangement of familiar materials and an introduction of forgotten or neglected materials? Whether these materials occupy center stage, as in courses specifically designed to deal with the woman factor, or whether they are in varying amounts incorporated in existing courses, they heighten our awareness of a whole dimension of human life. Indeed, far from limiting our vision, these courses allow a more complete estimate of the range of human experience and accomplishment.

One sometimes hears the objection: Why courses on women? Don't they make as little sense as courses on men? Scholars are finding that differences exist in women's experiences and that there may well be differences in their perceptions of those experiences; yet most courses center around the experiences and perceptions of males. In existing courses, moreover, attention is rarely given to the social and economic role of women and to the resulting psychological relationship between men and women, which in turn influences the nature of society and partly determines its values.

The special experience of women has been too long ignored in academic institutions.

The question arises whether the inclusion of courses on women might upset our balanced curriculum and weaken its professional approach. If we acknowledge that the purpose of a liberal arts curriculum is not merely to provide pre-professional preparation for our students, but also to give them an appreciation of their cultural heritage, then, in an institution where women are educated, it is our duty to give them an awareness of their legacy as women. The nature of that legacy is riddled with problems of sexual definition. Since positive answers cannot be supplied, it is even more urgent to place the "woman question" within many scholarly perspectives. In so doing, our students will become aware of the variety of roles women have played, of the social and economic necessities which prompted them, and also of the dilemmas women have faced and the resources they have called upon.

Annette K. Baxter
Professor of History;
Suzanne F. Wemple
Assistant Professor
of History

THE OVERBURY COLLECTION

As with any academic program, the sine qua non in the field of Women's Studies is a research library. In addition to offering a wide spectrum of books by and about women, the Barnard library houses the Overbury Collection, which includes among its nineteen hundred volumes unique editions of books by American women writers and nearly a thousand related manuscripts and letters. The bequest of the late Bertha Van Riper Overbury of the Class of 1896, the Collection ranges from a second American edition of the poems of Anne Bradstreet, America's earliest female poet, to first editions of such present-day authors as Pulitzer-prize-winning novelist Jean Stafford, who delivered the first annual Spring Lectures at the College in 1971.

Among the manuscripts are a portion of Hannah Adams' History of the Jews, published in 1812, two chapters of Louisa May Alcott's handwritten draft of Jack and Jill, several sonnets by Edna St. Vincent Millay, and two pages from Edith Wharton's French Ways and Their Meaning. Autographed letters by these same authors also exist in the Overbury Collection, as do letters by such celebrated women of the Colonial and Federal periods as Abigail Adams, Mercy Otis Warren, and one former slave, Phyllis Wheatley, who was born in Africa and brought to Boston in 1761.

Two particularly rare items from the nineteenth century are letters written by Margaret Fuller and Emily Dickinson. Notable items from the twentieth century include several letters written by Gertrude Stein and Mrs. Overbury's personal correspondence with Pearl Buck, the only American woman ever to win the Nobel Prize.

Of particular value to students are the bound volumes of nineteenth century periodicals that Mrs. Overbury was encouraged to collect by Librarian Emeritus Esther Greene and Professor of English Eleanor Tilton. These include a complete set of The Dial, which was edited by Margaret Fuller from 1840-44.

The Barnard library has the nucleus of a distinguished collection about women which we are seeking to expand.

The Overbury Collection offers students a history of American women both as writers and as women. As such, it represents an important measure of the quality of American civilization. The Center not only aims to increase the size and scope of the Overbury Collection of American women writers, but also to seek out distinguished collections on women of other nations and civilizations.

Iola Haverstick
Trustee

WOMEN IN THE ACADEMIC WORLD

Why do so few talented women go on to academic careers? One reason is that many of them attend the major universities and liberal arts colleges where women faculty and administrators are noticeable by their absence, particularly at the top levels of academic and administrative ranks. Women constitute about two percent of the full professors in the liberal arts departments at such institutions as Columbia, Chicago, Stanford, and Berkeley, and a lower figure at Yale, Princeton, and Harvard.

Another possible reason for the poor showing of women in the academic world is overt discrimination, although obvious disregard of women scholars is not as common today as it was in earlier years.

The most powerful reason, however, is a psychological/cultural one: the "internal ambivalences" most American women feel about combining career and family, especially between the ages of 18 and 25. (Ellen and Kenneth Keniston have written perceptively about such ambivalences.) Men generally devote these years to intense preparation for a career. Women who marry and have children between 18 and 25 may find these activities at variance with serious vocational commitment in a way that men do not.

The problem of aspiration is closely tied to the internal ambivalences. If one is uncertain about whether one should have a career, one cannot aspire, either publicly or privately, to be an art historian, plasma physicist, or professor of philosophy. Low expectations of women for themselves so infect the society that both men and women refuse to think of women as likely to occupy important posts.

The low proportion of women in top positions in universities is often attributed to the fact that they do not publish. If this is indeed true relative to men Ph.D.'s, it is because most women Ph.D.'s are not put into positions in which they must. Often if a woman is teaching, it is in a less prestigious institution than her husband's, and there she is under less pressure to publish. Sometimes she rationalizes her non-research on the basis that it would not be helpful to her professionally, anyway, so why bother. Her chances of having secretarial help and graduate students are probably less than those of men professors. In short, the incentives for her to do research are generally missing.

Women's colleges, and certainly Barnard, have always encouraged students to pursue serious lives. But many institutions, even those now admitting women, are inhospitable to their intellectual ambitions.

The simple question of time is another serious obstacle to women's professional advancement. There are just not enough hours in the day to do all she must. A recent UNESCO study revealed that the average working mother had 2.8 hours of free time on a typical weekday compared with 4.1 for a working man.

A final obstacle that a woman Ph.D. (or sometimes her husband) faces is the nepotism rule that still prevails on many campuses. Although more and more institutions are now willing to overlook two members of the same family teaching in one institution, few regard with enthusiasm the prospect of husband and wife in the same department, particularly if both are on the faculty. Rarely is the wife given the superior appointment. Typically she takes a job in another institution or works part-time as a "research associate" at her husband's institution.

I am not arguing that all talented young women should work for a Ph.D. or even should have a demanding career. What I am arguing for is that the options should be opened to women who might wish to do these things so that they have a greater opportunity to do them than they currently have. The options are what I am concerned about. Talented young men also need their options widened and broadened so that every bright young man does not need to feel that he must pursue a full-time professional career and leave homemaking to his wife. In short, I am arguing against sexual stereotyping at home and at work.

Perhaps the situation is different for Barnard women. The most compelling item I can cite about Barnard graduates' academic performance is that a recent study of women Ph.D.'s shows that in the years studied (the mid-fifties), on a per capita basis, Barnard led all institutions in the country in the numbers of its women receiving doctorates. It was second nationally in total numbers of women Ph.D.'s, leading such eminent (and much larger!) institutions as the University of California (Berkeley), the University of Chicago, and Stanford.

Three of the leading ten undergraduate producers of women doctorates were women's colleges: Hunter, first; Barnard, second; and Wellesley, eighth. (Hunter of course, was a women's college until 1964.) This is true despite the fact that only about ten percent of the women undergraduates were enrolled in women's colleges at the time that these women were students.

Hunter, Barnard, and Wellesley, which have been such leading nurturers of women doctorates, have several things in common. All three have that increasing rarity, a woman president, which Barnard and Wellesley have had throughout their histories. All have had women in leading administrative positions. Furthermore, Barnard, Wellesley, and Hunter all had a majority of women on their faculties, and Barnard and Wellesley still do.

But at a time when 95 percent of the women who are in college in America are in coeducational institutions, those colleges and universities should show greater concern for the quality of the education they provide for women. Rarely have male colleges gone coed because they thought it would be better for girls; generally it has been because they thought it would improve the place for the men who were already there. I am not against coeducation, only urging that the institution be as truly coeducational in its graduate school, faculties, and administrations as it is in its undergraduate body. Tokenism has no place in higher education today.

Patricia Albjerg Graham
Associate Professor
of History and Education

WOMEN AND WORK

An important function of the Women's Center will be to implement career planning—to help students and alumnae think seriously about the full range of careers, make appropriate plans, and go on to achieve their vocational goals. This is a large order, but we believe that at a time when opportunities and options for women are expanding, Barnard is in a unique position to pioneer in these areas.

Enlarging on current programs for students carried out by the Office of Placement and Career Planning and by a number of alumnae committees, the Center will encourage and, wherever possible, sponsor new projects to help students take themselves and their interests seriously and learn how to plan for productive lives. Such projects will include a program of group counseling where students will have a chance to raise questions and explore attitudes about their role as women; and an expansion of career advising to stimulate and sustain student interest in such traditionally male fields as business, medicine, dentistry, law, engineering, architecture and urban planning, and to include closer ties with professional schools, particularly admissions committees.

In addition, the Women's Center will encourage frequent seminars and career conferences, bringing in women, often alumnae, representing different fields and different life styles, who are prepared to talk informally about the satisfactions and problems they face as working women. In this way the Center will focus on one of Barnard's great strengths — the large number of successful alumnae who often express a willingness to share their experiences with undergraduates. The dialogue that the Center hopes to foster between alumnae and students, and professional alumnae and non-working alumnae who need encouragement, can be extremely significant in building new confidence, understanding, and trust among women of all ages.

Educating women means more than giving them academic courses. Programs to help them plan careers, before and after the B.A., are an integral part of the Center.

The Center plans to expand the services currently offered to alumnae, offering concrete vocational help whenever needed. This new emphasis may include helping women work out flexible time schedules and/or arrangements for getting fellowships or loans in order to complete graduate and professional training; helping alumnae keep up to date in a field when activities outside the home are impossible; setting up workshops for groups of mature alumnae who need counseling about returning to work.

Initially the Center will be concerned with providing encouragement and support in a few important areas. These will include a strong commitment to exposing and ending discrimination wherever we find it as it affects women seeking employment or entrance to graduate or professional school. The Center will endorse an expansion of our collection of vocational material to include more complete information on careers, graduate schools, and professional schools, as well as details on all the economic, legal, and social changes affecting women. The Center will also encourage research on vocational activities of women, both for our own use and for periodic publication.

Jane S. Gould
Director
Office of Placement
and Career Planning

A SOCIOLOGIST LOOKS AT THE CENTER

The leadership for change in feminine roles must come from women, says this eminent member of the Barnard faculty — but must eventually include men.

The anti-feminist feeling following World War II manifested itself, among other ways, in the criticism of women's education on the grounds that women were educated "as if they were men in disguise." Instead of making women proud to be women, it was alleged that the feminist glorified masculine aptitudes and goals. At least one critic urged the creation of a "distinctively feminine" college curriculum, one in which the minor arts of ceramics, textiles, cooking, interior decorating and the like would not be excluded because of the hitherto dominant masculine preference for the abstract and the flamboyant.

In Women in the Modern World: Their Education and Their Dilemmas, published in 1953, I condemned this view as reactionary. I attempted to show that neither the psychological differences between men and women nor their different social roles demand a distinctively feminine college curriculum. On the contrary, the book claimed that the closer a liberal arts college comes to fulfilling its goals, the better it serves both men and women within the framework of the same broad curriculum.

Much, but not enough, has changed since 1950. The soaring rise in the proportion of married women in the work force, the considerable percentage of women college graduates who are working even at the peak of their child-rearing responsibilities, the greater likelihood that women will outlive their husbands, the concern with the population explosion — these and other changes mean that women do not and cannot define their lives solely in terms of wifehood and motherhood.

It is a cliche to attribute social problems to rapid social changes and the dislocations they produce, but it is equally true that problems persist because of resistances to change. While society today is moving towards a less rigid differentiation between the ideals of masculinity and femininity, as well as between the social roles of the sexes, we suffer from massive inconsistencies in values and in institutions. As a result, women do not fully realize their intellectual, professional and, more generally, their creative potential. Discrimination against women in access to professional schools and in jobs, pay, and promotions persists and must be combatted. More resistant to change are the indirect obstacles to full development of women: the low aspirations and lack of self-confidence of women, some obsolete stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, the paucity of existing facilities (e.g. day-care centers), and the lack of organizational innovations that would ultimately make it feasible for women, who must or choose to do so, to combine family life and work on much the same terms as men do.

The current strains in masculine and feminine social roles and the Women's Movement exert great pressures upon institutions of higher learning for self-evaluation. What are the responsibilities of a college such as Barnard at this particular point in the history of women's education? The answer, I believe, is to remain steadfast in its goals and be innovative in its methods. The College has always been committed to the fullest realization of the intellectual and professional potentialities of its students, and has always sought to

maintain a scholarly, productive faculty concerned with undergraduate education. Today Barnard College, by virtue of its tradition and its resources, has some unique opportunities to lead in certain curricular and extracurricular innovations described in this booklet. I am particularly concerned about Women's Studies.

Courses dealing with feminine and masculine roles of past and contemporary societies or with psychological sex differences are as important for male as for female scholars and students. Such studies address themselves to intellectual problems of broad theoretical significance. Moreover, they illuminate the social roots of personal conflicts and may thus serve to increase rationality in human affairs. But it is my impression that male undergradutes do not demand such courses and that male scholars are not likely to address themselves to such research, partly because the topics have the ring of less prestigious "feminine" concerns. The more important reason for the neglect lies elsewhere. For all the latent anxieties, and conflicts of values and interests that male students and their professors experience in this sphere, the whole issue of sex roles is not as stressful, and therefore not as salient, for them as it is for women — and so the impetus for such research and courses is likely to come from women.

In the long run, Women's Studies, if they fulfill their mission, will make a contribution to knowledge of universal significance. Similarly, the Women's Center will become of concern also to male members of the University community. The roles of women in our society cannot be changed without also changing the role of men. If women must be the prime movers, and I believe they must, the sooner we involve men in this common endeavor, the brighter the prospects for accomplishing our goals.

Mirra Komarovsky
Professor Emeritus
of Sociology

Women's Studies Courses Offered At Barnard College In 1971-72

Female and Male: An Interdisciplinary Approach. (fall)
Evolutionary, genetic, and physiological bases of sex: factors determining sex differences, hormones and behavior, pregnancy and motherhood, sex role strategies in the animal kingdom. Cultural definitions of sex roles in comparative perspective: ranges of variability and the significance of the constants. Psychological development of feminine and masculine behavior and behavorial sex differences in contemporary society. Personality theory and sex roles: Freud and Erikson. Current problems in sexual, familial, and economic aspects of female-male relationships and in the status of women. Projections for the future and direction of social policy. Professor Mirra Komarovsky (Chairman), Professors David Ehrenfeld, Clive Kessler, and Barbara Mates.
(This is a joint offering of the departments of Anthropology, Biological Sciences, Psychology, and Sociology.)

Female and Male—A Sociological Perspective. (spring)
Economic, demographic, and cultural changes modifying the traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Stresses in female-male relationships at various stages of the life cycle and in the family, occupational world, and other institutional settings. Class and race differences in social roles of the sexes. Not open to students who have taken Female and Male: An Interdisciplinary Approach. Professor Mirra Komarovsky.

The Role of Women in Modern Economic Life. (spring)
Topics to be discussed include the extent of women's education; labor force participation by women; economic factors affecting marriage, divorce, and fertility; economic discrimination against women; effect of government policy on women's position; and international and historical comparisons. Mrs. Cynthia Lloyd.

Images of Woman in Literature. (fall)
Sexual roles and the place of woman as represented in the Bible and in works by Shakespeare, Jane Austen, D. H. Lawrence, Doris Lessing, and others. Explorations of the identity of women writers. Professor Catharine Stimpson.

Special Themes in Modern French Literature. III. Feminism. (spring)
The role and struggle of women as seen by authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Readings from feminist authors and analyses of various literary idealizations of women. Authors include Michelet, Proudhon, Flora Tristan, Zola, Maupassant, Mauriac, Saint-Exupery, Christiane Rochefort, Nathalie Sarraute, Simone de Beauvoir. Mrs. Sylvie Sayre.

French Woman Writers. (spring)
A literary and cultural study of poets, prose writers, and influential groups, with emphasis on: Marguerite de Navarre, Louise Labe, the "Precieuses," Madame de Sevigne, Madame de LaFayette, the eighteenth-century Salons, Madame de Stael, Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, George Sand, Colette, Simone de Beauvoir. Professor Tatiana Greene.

Colloquium on German Women Writers of the Twentieth Century. (fall)
A study of the works, prose, and poetry, of Ilse Aichinger, Ingeborg Bachmann, Hilde Domin, Nelly Sachs, Anna Seghers, Gabriele Wohmann, Christa Wolf. Introductory lectures and class discussions. A term paper on a topic to be chosen by the student, in English or German. Professor Brigitte Bradley.

The History of Women in the Late Roman Empire and the Middle Ages. (spring)
The origins of the legal and social position of women in medieval society as reflected in patristic writings, Roman and Germanic codes. The contributions of women in the high and late Middle Ages to feudal and urban society, courtly love, monasticism, mysticism, medicine, and literature, studied through primary and secondary sources. Colloquium. Professor Suzanne Wemple.

History of Women in America: to 1890. (fall)
An examination of important historical and literary sources for the study of American women from colonial times to 1890. Colloquium. Professor Annette Baxter.

History of Women in America: since 1890. (spring)
An examination of important historical and literary sources for the study of American women from 1890 to today. Colloquium. Professor Annette Baxter.

Readings in Oriental Studies. (fall)
Colloquium on major problems of Asian civilizations. Focus for 1971-72: The relative roles of male and female. An examination, through literary and historical sources, of the principal relationships of men and women—as lovers and companions, wives and husbands, mothers and fathers, and in their special roles in religious and mundane life—in traditional and modern India, China, and Japan. Professors John Meskill and Barbara Miller.

Executive Committee
The Women's Center

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